

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

K N A R E S B R O U G H,

OCTOBER 23d, 1796,

ON OCCASION OF

A FORM OF THANKSGIVING

BEING READ FOR

THE LATE ABUNDANT HARVEST.
K

BY THE REV. SAMUEL CLAPHAM, M. A.

L E E D S :

PRINTED BY BINNS AND BROWN :

SOLD BY J. BINNS, LEEDS; HARGROVE, KNARESBROUGH; TODD AND TESSEY-
MAN, YORK; AND ROBSON, DEIGHTON, AND JOHNSON, LONDON.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Lately published, by the same Author,

A SERMON, preached at Sunderland, for the Benefit of the Charity School, December 16th, 1792. Dedicated, by Permission, to THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

A SERMON, preached at Knaresbrough, for the Sunday Schools, July 12th, 1793. Dedicated, by Permission, to THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

A SERMON, preached at the Visitation holden at Skipton, May 12th, 1794. Published at the Request of the Clergy.

A SERMON, preached at the Visitation of the Lord Bishop of Chester, holden at Boroughbridge, September 2d, 1794, in which is impartially considered, How far METHODISM conduces to the Interests of Christianity, and the Welfare of Society. PUBLISHED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S COMMAND.

A SERMON, preached at Knaresbrough, October 12th, 1794, before the Royal Knaresbrough Volunteer Foresters. Dedicated, by Permission, to THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD LOUGHBOROUGH, LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

A SERMON, preached at Stockton upon Tees, on the Fast Day, March 25th, 1795. Dedicated, by Permission, to THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.



S E R M O N, &c.

DEUT. viii. 10—11.

WHEN THOU HAST EATEN, AND ART FULL,
THEN THOU SHALT BLESS THE LORD
THY GOD, FOR THE GOOD LAND
WHICH HE HATH GIVEN THEE.

BEWARE THAT THOU FORGET NOT THE
LORD THY GOD, IN NOT KEEPING HIS
COMMANDMENTS, AND HIS JUDG-
MENTS, AND HIS STATUTES,
WHICH I COMMAND THEE
THIS DAY.

WHEN the Jewish leader had conducted the Children of Israel through all “the evils and troubles” they had unavoidably to encounter in their passage through a country, sometimes barren, and sometimes hostile, and brought them almost within sight of the promised land; he concentrates in one

view the snares they had escaped, the dangers they had overcome, the judgments they had experienced, and the manner in which, during the space of forty years, they were, by the visible interposition of the Almighty, provided “ with bread to eat, and “ water to drink:” thus impressing their minds with a sense of their own unworthiness, of the majesty of God, of the severity of his judgments, and of the extent of his love; he beseeches them as men, he conjures them as God’s peculiar people, when “ the Lord their God shall have brought them into the good “ land—a land of wheat and barley—a land wherein they should “ not lack any thing—to remember and to bless the Lord their God “ for the good land which he had given them.”

It hath in imitation of such an example, seemed good to our most religious and gracious King, to enjoin the Ministers of our Church, to offer unto God, in every congregation, during four successive Sundays, a general Form of Thanksgiving for the late abundant Harvest, and auspicious Season. A measure so fraught with piety towards Him, “ from whom all good things “ do come;” so congenial to the sentiments of every thinking creature, redeemed by his mercy, and supported by his hand, that the heart of every person here assembled was moved, I doubt not, at the hearing of that admirable “ *Prayer of Thanksgiving*,” with the devout rapture of the Psalmist, “ Praise the Lord, “ O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name. “ Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,
“ who

“ who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with
“ mercy and loving-kindness.”

On the propriety, therefore, of appointing a Form of Thanksgiving, I need not, I presume, expatiate. Every countenance expresses the duty—every tongue proclaims the necessity, of lifting up our hearts unto the Lord, acknowledging the marvellous loving-kindness of our God, in incontestably obviating the pretexts of scarcity with which some men were alarmed—in removing the veils of concealment, by means of which, others were perplexed with doubts, and agitated with apprehensions.

But whilst we declare the mercy of the Lord our God in gladdening our eyes, first with the anticipation, and afterwards in satisfying our souls with an actual abundance of every sort of grain; it would be injurious to forget the active exertions made by his Majesty's ministers, to import a supply so large, as, if there were a real scarcity, might accommodate us with what should be necessary; or if the enormity of the price arose solely from motives of interest, might frustrate such a malignant purpose.

The measure, however, which seemed most expedient to Government, as promising both a more abundant supply, and promoting a more expeditious importation was, to allow the merchants a bounty on the quantity of corn imported. What that quantity is, in pursuance of such encouragement, has not yet been
exactly

exactly ascertained. But I am enabled to state, from the highest authority,* that there hath been already paid by Government, on the corn so imported, no less a sum than **FOUR HUNDRED AND TEN THOUSAND POUNDS**, as bounties. In an Administration, at once employed in repelling our enemies—in protecting our commerce—in establishing internal peace*—and in “satisfying our poor with bread,” we place, and justly, the most unlimited confidence. To such men, distinguished by such measures, we, with unanimous approbation, “wish good luck in “the name of the Lord.”

The idea of a scarcity of corn was, it is well known, first suggested by designing men, who, having failed of their expected success in the promulgation of the most licentious and dangerous doctrines, hoped to arrive at the same end, by pursuing different means. When the good sense of the people, aided by the vigilance of Government, rejected, with marked abhorrence, those levelling principles, so industriously disseminated, and so vehemently enforced;—when the citadel, whether secretly assailed by the stratagem of art, or openly attacked by the instrument of violence, was defended by sagacity still more wary, or protected by force still more powerful, the sons of mischief, though defeated, yet not reclaimed, had recourse to a measure, which, if it eventually failed of producing complete success, promised, at least, this gratification to their malignity, to beget dissatisfaction, and to create disturbance. So prodigious, as they loudly proclaimed,

was

was the quantity of corn exported for the support of our Allies on the Continent, that, however abundant might be the ensuing harvest, there would not, in the course of a few months, be a sufficiency of grain left in the country for our own consumption. This, like every other report retailed by the abettors of faction, was too improbable to be implicitly believed. But what was the consequence? A description of men, affluent, but yet mercenary, influenced neither by the reproof of shame, nor the restraint of principle—I would not misrepresent them with intention, nor mention them with disrespect—formed a combination, enhanced instantly the price of their corn, withheld it in a little time, almost entirely from the market; and, rising progressively in their demands, refused at the last to sell it at all, except at the exorbitant rate of two-thirds more than its intrinsic value. Many of those very men, though possessed of large stacks and full granaries, speculated in monopolies to a very considerable amount. They purchased of the less opulent, and of the needy farmers, their whole stock. Thus, getting into their own hands almost the entire produce of the country, corn could be had only on the terms their avarice thought fit to impose. To so miserable a situation was the whole kingdom reduced. Yet the hardships, great as they were, arising from this unfeeling monopoly, were, however, with respect to the lowest class of society, neither so long in their duration, nor so severe in their effects, as might have been expected. In very many towns, I believe, but in this particularly, contributions were solicited, and to the honour of many individuals be it recorded, benefactions

benefactions unexpectedly liberal, were received. Characters the most respectable, some possessed of large fortunes, and all of unimpeached integrity—some actuated by a desire of doing good—and others acquainted with the respective situations of the objects who needed relief, readily gave their attention, and cheerfully devoted their leisure to the troublesome office of purchasing corn, and to an office still more troublesome, of retailing it, at a low price, to the necessitous and indigent. To which must be added, that men of property, in the town and neighbourhood, had the humanity to supply the market with the corn produced by their own farms, and the precaution to sell it, on the most moderate terms, to those only who were unable to pay the extravagant sums demanded by the farmer.

To alleviate, still further, the wants of the poor, the wages of labour were raised, in a degree of proportion to the necessities of life. Whatever the occupation, the artisan, the manufacturer, the labourer, though he perceived his expences increasing, was each, from his increase of wages, enabled, by severe frugality, to support them. But the aged and infirm—they who live on a small stated allowance—the handicraftsman, and the person of little trade, and small capital, deriving his subsistence from the retail of trifling articles; ashamed, it may be, to beg, suffered more than might at first be conceived, and more than their sensibility would perhaps allow them to expose to public observation.

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There is another description of men, they, who form the connecting link in the chain of society, between the highest and the lowest, whose support arises from settled incomes, and which, whatever be the complexion of the times, admit of no advance; these feel the effects of the dearness of provisions, all originating in the high price of corn, with force almost beyond what the pen can describe, or the imagination can paint. Many of this description, accustomed, from circumstances unnecessary to be here enumerated, to little elegances and certain indulgences, which their situation in life allowed, and their respectability in society sanctioned, have been lately compelled to make a total sacrifice of indulgences and elegances, in order that they might be the better enabled to purchase bread and provisions for their families. Such a reverse of things, it must be acknowledged, cannot well be supported without the aid of reflection, and the union of piety. For the hardship of the case is extremely aggravated by the consideration, that the mortification they endure, and the sacrifices they make, are to be attributed, not so much to the burthen of taxes, and the support of the state, as to the rapacity of a set of men, whose bowels of compassion are shut against the welfare of the whole community.

A question then will occur, whether such pernicious combinations, such dangerous monopolies, cannot in future, be, in part at least, prevented. The discussion will not, I trust, be thought inapplicable to the subject, or unbecoming the place in

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which

which we are now assembled: for to suggest the means of promoting the welfare, and increasing the comforts of the lower class of men, is itself an act of religion peculiarly pleasing to the Almighty. And should it in the sequel of the enquiry appear, that the measures recommended will be productive of the interest, as they unquestionably constitute the duty, of those whom Providence has invested with authority, to interpose with efficacious energy in behalf of the needy and the indigent, let us implore the Almighty Ruler, who views actions in their motives, to inspire such ministers of his will, with wisdom to discern, and to invigorate them with ardour of resolution to accomplish it!

The revenues originally conferred on the Church, for the maintenance of its ministers, by the wisdom and the piety of our forefathers, consisted chiefly of the tenths of the produce of the respective parishes. But such splendid revenues have, from many, very many Churches, been long alienated. Where, however, the Church is possessed of them, would the Incumbent, upon the increase of the price of corn *beyond its real value*, signify to his parishioners, that, instead of letting his tythes as usual, he will take them in kind, in order that he may relieve the wants of the poor, and obviate the inconveniences awaiting all committed to his charge, by selling his corn at the rate, or nearly so, at which it sold before the advance took place—though the farmer might lament the loss which he was about to sustain—the Pastor would not, nay he could not, thereby expose himself either to the imputation of avarice, or the surmise of extortion. No! his revenues would then be confessedly applied to the purpose for which, in the
original

original endowment, they were intended. And after abundantly supplying every family in his own parish, the Clergyman, whose Church is so happily circumstanced, may, in general, diffuse his blessings with a very liberal hand to some of his neighbours, who have not such resource. That a plan of such magnitude could not be executed without much trouble, and some anxiety, I am aware. But each person would, in the execution of it, be exempt from mortification in the defeat of his schemes, and from chagrin in the disappointment of his hopes. Besides, he would enjoy more pleasure than he bestows: his influence would be confessed over all that might solicit his kindresses, and over all that acknowledged them; he would have the satisfaction of perceiving gratitude rising into affection, and of common observation kindling into attachment. I will venture to add, that, would that body of the parochial Clergy to whom I allude, *upon the suggestion of an artificial scarcity, or the prospect of an interested monopoly*, exert themselves in the manner I presume to recommend, they would, independently of the moral influence arising from it, become the highest benefactors to their country.*

But it is not by a small number of the Clergy acting upon this or any other principle, that combinations of interested men can be entirely defeated; the wealthy Landholder must not only give his concurrence, but must warm his heart with the hope, and animate his endeavours with the desire, of being essentially and extensively useful to society.

His first consideration then will be, by what means the produce of his lands can be rendered most universally useful. Now, however fruitful be the soil, and abundant the crop, if a previous combination subsist among the farmers, not to sell the corn at a price proportionate to the fair produce, and the existing quantity, but upon such terms only as avarice shall impose, and hard-heartedness demand; if instead of bringing it to the market, it is either wantonly to be kept at home, or unfeelingly to be sent to a distance, to create another monopoly; and, if agreeably to this general combination, the market is occasionally to be supplied in a very scanty manner, in order to enhance the price, and to impress, as far as can be, an opinion, that there *is*, in direct contradiction to our senses, an actual scarcity: if those men are to be vested with such power, and exert it to such purposes, the fruitfulness of the seasons is defeated of their end, and the very Providence of God arrested in its course.

How, it may be said, can the evil be remedied? The question may perhaps be resolved without the application of acute sagacity, or the deductions of mature experience. Let the opulent Landholder, in accommodating his tenants with farms, not forget his own interest, let him not forget that he owes a duty to his own family—for from this source of error much evil has originated; let him have the real value of his several farms fairly and accurately ascertained; after which, let him very deliberately revolve in his mind, how much, according to the price of labour throughout

out his neighbourhood, the mechanic, the artisan, and the labourer, burthened with an helpless offspring, can, in every season of the year, afford to spare for the purchase of bread. In that proportion, equitable towards the community, and not disadvantageous to himself, let him fix his rent on his respective farms. But let this be one of the conditions of the agreement, **FULLY UNDERSTOOD, AND FAITHFULLY TO BE OBSERVED**, that if his tenants join in any combination to raise the price of corn—or if they sell their own at an exorbitant price, because some of their neighbours do the same—or if when there is an *apparent* scarcity, they send it out of the neighbourhood, **THEY SHALL NO LONGER CONTINUE TO OCCUPY THEIR FARMS.**

It may perhaps be said, that tenants who live under such controul, have sold their liberty. It might with abundantly greater propriety be said, that men who live in a state of society, and who therefore resign a small portion of their natural liberty, in order to preserve, and to enjoy a greater, are slaves. To suppose an hardship in such conditions is an insult to common sense. The tenants know before they enter upon their farms, that they have by express conditions bound themselves under certain restraints, and that if they are deprived of a *temporary* advantage, the mortification is fully counterbalanced by their escaping a permanent increase of rent.* In a subject of such vast importance as this we are discussing, it is surely the indispensable duty
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of understanding to inform misapprehension, of rectitude to controul avarice, and of authority to suppress extortion. Is the whole property of the kingdom to be again endangered, because a certain description of men aim at complete independence—at leading captive to their will the fortunes of the rich—and at staking on *their* humanity the existence of the poor?

Another objection may be urged, that land will not, under such restrictions, be improved.* But the objection is, I am persuaded, entirely without foundation. I suppose the Landholder to be possessed of large property, to which I attach high character, and irreproachable integrity. Let such an one propose his conditions, and assure his tenants that the fulfilling of them shall be, on his part, substitutes for bonds and contracts; and in such assurances they will place just as strong confidence as in the obligations of a covenant, or the security of a lease.

All this cannot be effected without determined resolution, and unremitted perseverance—but let no one shrink from the toil of ascending the steps of patriotism, because he will perceive the careless, the indolent, and the timid loitering below, either ridiculing the necessity, dreading the labour, or doubting the success: let him enjoy the delights of such extensive utility—delights more, much more satisfying to the soul, than the lethargy of sloth, than the cares of avarice, or the revellings of intemperance. Let him rouse himself to action with the just and interesting

ing reflection, that his possessions have actually been in danger. Would to God I could prevail with the Great, if only for their own sakes, without considering the good of the community—to pursue those, or similar measures, in which there can be no hazard in the miscarriage, in which there will be every advantage from the success!

The present mode, suggested by indolence, and embraced by avarice, of letting large farms, on long leases, in consequence of which such tenants become, in every sense of the word, independent; as it first originated in egregious mistake, so if continued, will, I fear, ultimately end in extensive ruin. Is it not well known to every person I am now addressing, that such independence, in its nature so odious, in its effects so baneful, was made the foundation of a pretext to exasperate the poor to acts of violence, and to scenes of tumult? and is it not believed by every man of reflection, that such acts of violence, and scenes of tumult, were designed as “the beginning of sorrows?” as the general signal for an attempt to be made by desperate men, to overthrow, by one desperate effort, the Constitution of both Church and State? Should the Country be oppressed AGAIN and AGAIN—should the tempers of the poor be a SECOND and a THIRD time tried by such cruel engines of oppression, who can say what may be the result of such shameful monopoly—what the consequence of such iniquitous speculations? He who shall devise with wisdom, and execute with resolution, a plan by which

which such extortionate rapacity may be restrained, will be considered as having rendered a more essential service to his country, than the General who hath exterminated its rebellious sons, and vanquished its foreign foes.

But I forbear. I have delivered my sentiments freely upon a subject which demands the most serious reflections of the Landholder, and solicits the profoundest investigations of the Statesman—a subject which, during the long season the price of corn has been so exorbitant, hath been invariably considered, as inseparably connected, not only with the present, but the future welfare of the community—nay, perhaps with the preservation of the Constitution. It behoves us to consider further, that “ unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain :” unless our conduct be such as to induce him to behold us with an eye of mercy, our Constitution in Church and State, the Fabric upon which a Briton looks with religious veneration, will tumble into ruins.

I will therefore beg the continuance of your attention, whilst I enforce upon you the words of the text. “ When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.—Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day.”

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The abundant harvest with which we have been blessed, and the very favourable season with which it was attended, demand our warmest acknowledgments, our most devout thanksgivings to Him, who looketh with compassion on the works of his own hands. Supplied, as we are "with bread to eat without scarceness," and permitted, such is our happy lot—whilst other nations are harassed with the calamities of war, smarting under the scourge of oppression, or stricken with the rod of revolt—to sit in quiet, and without apprehension, each "under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree;" how powerfully are we summoned by the warning voice of gratitude, by the solemn call of duty, to beware that "we forget not the Lord our God in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes!" I will not intermingle with the piety of thanksgiving, the description of our national character; but you will allow me earnestly to exhort you to the observance of some duties, which, in the several situations we respectively fill in society, are, it may be, carelessly overlooked, or unaccountably forgotten. To those then who constitute the most numerous, as well as the most useful part of it, "who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow," I shall address such reflections as cannot indeed escape the most common observer, but which force themselves with peculiar power upon the mind of every Minister of the Gospel, who is solicitous to establish in the hearts of men, the doctrines which that Gospel teaches, and to influence their conduct, by the precepts which it prescribes.

Now from whatever cause it proceeds, certain it is, that many, very many of the description of people I am now addressing, live and die in total ignorance of the nature of the Christian Covenant. But you, my Christian brethren, who frequent the house of God—whether from a consciousness of duty, which you dare not violate—from the power of habit, which produces no farther influence on your mind—or from the suggestion of accident, which conducts you hither—whatever be your motive—be prevailed upon to consider seriously with yourselves, that THIS is indeed “ the “ house of God,” where he commands the attendance of “ both “ high and low, rich and poor,” that they all may be taught the principles, and by the operation of those principles, be impelled to the practice of the duties of Christianity. That you may fulfil the command in its strictest sense, let “ what you “ hear produce in you the fruits of good living.” And whilst others—placing all their delight in a scheme of successful rapine, or a night of riotous intemperance, live a prey to the dread of detection, and the instigations of remorse—you, supported by the reflections upon a well-spent life, and an unshaken reliance on the merits of your Redeemer, will always be enabled to look backward on the past, with comfortable remembrance, and forward to the future, with enlivening hope. Whilst your neighbours dying daily around you, totally unacquainted with the God who created, and the Saviour who redeemed them; or distracted with the apprehensions of going into the presence of the God, whose Holy Day they have all their life long profaned, and whose sacred name they

they have continually blasphemed ; overwhelmed with the reflection of having prepared their children by example, and trained them by precept, for the punishment they feel, even whilst they are lingering on the brink of eternity—you, on the contrary, will behold “ the valley of the shadow of death,” exempt from the terrors of guilt, and the apprehensions of punishment. By a virtuous life, which can alone produce so holy a death, determine this day “ to bless the Lord your God for the good land which he hath given you :” let Religion be the strong and active principle, always working upon your minds, and regulating your behaviour, that you never henceforth, “ forget the Lord your God, in not “ keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his “ statutes.”

Among the middle rank of men it has always been supposed, that religion has chosen her peculiar habitation. In that class of society it is, that all men look for the greatest propriety of demeanour, the strictest principles of rectitude, the highest degree of piety. If indeed we take a view of our religious assemblies, if we estimate the number of our constant communicants, we generally find in every Parish, that, of the description of men, which constitutes the middle rank, our congregations in general, and our communicants in particular, are chiefly composed. Yet among those persons so worthily distinguished, we cannot but be apprehensive, that there is sometimes “ the form of godliness without the “ power ;” and that the period of their religious services returns

without due preparation of heart. Let me here remark, that, from the frequent intercourse of familiar visits, a spirit of prying curiosity, of censure, and of scandal, is extremely prevalent. To countenance scandal in others, or to propagate it ourselves, is the entertainment of only weak minds: I am however compelled to add, that a spirit of piety towards God, and of uncharitableness towards men, cannot subsist in the same breast. I cannot conclude this part of my discourse without observing, that it is very devoutly to be wished, that the middle class of society would pay a greater regard to the religious conduct of their dependents. How many men are engaged in your service, whose faces are never seen within these sacred walls? who, instead of devoting the Lord's Day to religious worship, and exemplary conduct, employ the morning in *your* concerns, the afternoon in indolence, and the evening in profligacy? If there be advantages in religion, impart them unto those who are indebted to you for their subsistence. You need not to interpose the influence of your authority, you will accomplish your purpose by the power of persuasion. Have you received blessings from the Almighty yourselves? by laying up in a napkin the talent committed to you, you prevent the influence, and counteract the power, of his graces: you resemble an ungrateful soil, and a sandy desert, where the sun loses his seasons, and where the showers produce only thistles and weeds. Rather let us, for the mercies which the Lord our God hath vouchsafed to us, bless his holy name; and let us, by vigilant circumspection, "beware that we do not forget him, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes."

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In addressing myself to the higher ranks of men, I am extremely solicitous so far to interest their attention, as that they may be induced to "receive the word with meekness." And humbly do I implore the Almighty, that he would graciously be pleased to accompany my arguments with such power, and my exhortations with such efficacy, that my reasoning may convince, and my entreaties may prevail!

To you then, who are possessed of "this world's goods," and who stand as "a beacon on an hill," directing the steps, and influencing the actions of beholders, permit me to suggest to you, that, according as you reverence the ordinances, and fulfil the precepts of the gospel, the lower class almost entirely, and the middle rank of men in a great degree, will be decent or profligate, regular or immoral. If you, considering yourselves as participating in the common blessings of Christianity, would demonstrate to the world, by your religious conduct, your sense of the loving-kindness of God, so peculiarly manifested towards you, soon, very soon, would religion become more engaging in its appearance, more extensive in its influence, and more powerful in its effects.* However exemplary the demeanour, zealous the labours, and animated the exhortations of the Clergy, yet so attractive is greatness, so dazzling is splendour, that our discourses are heard with indifference, whilst your deportment is copied with emulation.*

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But you are not only required to encourage virtue by your conduct, but to suppress vice by your authority.

Can you then, whilst you behold, and you cannot but behold, the profligacy of many of your dependents with abhorrence, and their indisposition to religion with concern, can you refuse interesting yourselves to restrain the one, and to promote the other? Let me engrave upon your hearts, that, as we are all of us in our several stations, so are you more especially, accountable, not only for the duties which you omit, but for the negligence you encourage. Would the nobility, and men of distinction, express their approbation at the presence, and their displeasure at the absence of their several tenants and dependents from the service of the Church on the Lord's Day, they would, I am persuaded, leave their estates better secured to their posterity, than may, at some subsequent period, be allowed to the evidence of long possession, or the production of an undisputed title. God grant that period to be far, very far distant! God grant the genius of Christianity to be so widely diffused, and its precepts so generally practised, as to dispel every such agonizing apprehension! When it was triumphantly boasted that your property would soon be transferred to other possessors, who were the men that, with such malicious pleasure, anticipated the ruin which usurpation devised, and insolence vaunted? Those who seldom attend the worship, and seem totally indifferent to the honour of Almighty God;—those “who deny the divinity of the Lord “that bought them;” and those who perhaps persuade themselves, and would endeavor to persuade us, that “their sins are forgiven, “and their iniquities are covered.”

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If these observations be just, and that they are, no man of common understanding will, I apprehend, attempt to deny, let me humbly and earnestly solicit those to whom they are addressed, to take them into their immediate, and most serious consideration. From the exalted stations in which they are placed, they are condemned to pay a certain tribute of their time to the rigorous claims of custom, and the formal demands of ceremony. Let them devote a small part of their time to the honour of God, and the interests of mankind. Let them not be intimidated by the dread of singularity, nor deterred by the whisper of ridicule. Let the reflection of their being so highly favoured in the scale of society—of the blessings which even *they* derive from the abundant mercy of God, “in turning the scarcity,” we have so long felt into a prospect of “cheapness and plenty,” prevail with them to “bless the Lord their God for the good land which he hath “given them.”

And let us all with bended knees, and thankful hearts, thus pour out the effusions of our souls to Almighty God, our heavenly Father.

Almighty and everlasting God, the author of all good, the fountain of all mercy, by whose protection we have been preserved, and by whose bounty we have been sustained; we, thy sinful creatures, offer unto Thee, from the bottom of our souls, those acknowledgments which thy blessings demand, and promise unto
Thee

Thee that obedience which thy sovereignty exacts. We render Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness; more especially for that Thou hast given us, rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. May we employ thy gifts to thy glory, and our own salvation. Impressed with a sense of thy indulgent bounty, we devote ourselves to thy service with pure affection, with cheerful minds, and ready wills. And as Thou seeest all our miseries, and knowest all our infirmities, the many trespasses we commit, and the many duties we neglect; since the way of man is not in himself, since it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps aright; leave us not to our own government, but put into our minds, we beseech Thee, good desires, and by thy continual help, bring them to such effect, that our faith may be invigorated, our hope exalted, and our charity enlarged. In all our troubles give us sure confidence in Thee, an affiance in thy Providence, and a dependence on thy protection; and fill our souls with the conviction, that, if we love Thee, all things will in the end work together for our good; that thou wilt forgive us our sins, and enable us to forsake them, and at the last wilt receive us to dwell with Thee in thy eternal and glorious kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, O Father, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end—AMEN.

NOTES.

PAGE 6th,—LINE 2d.

FROM *the highest authority*.—I shall not, I hope, incur the displeasure of the Earl of Liverpool, by making my public, and most respectful acknowledgments to his Lordship, for the very obliging manner in which he received my request, and for the directions, which, with his accustomed condescension, he was pleased to give to a Gentleman in the office for trade, to answer my enquiries.

Since my sermon was preached, the same Gentleman has had the goodness to acquaint me, that the account of the Corn imported under the encouragement of Government, has been made up: and it now appears from the custom-house books, that there has been imported under the Bounty into Great-Britain—Of Wheat, Rye, and Indian Corn, the prodigious quantity of SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY EIGHT THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO Quarters.

Of Flour and Meal, ONE HUNDRED FORTY ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THREE Cwts.

Establishing internal peace.—Among the many splendid acts on which the present Administration may congratulate itself, the Institution of Yeomanry Cavalry, and of Volunteer Corps, must be a subject of triumphant exultation. Attempts to excite riots were insidiously made, and dispositions to yield to such attempts, in order to compel the farmers to sell their corn at a moderate price, were not unfrequently manifested: but peace was preserved, and confusion, together with every evil work, prevented, by the recollection that Troops of Cavalry, and Corps of Volunteers, were raised for the very purpose of suppressing riots, and supporting order.

Much therefore as the Country feels, and strongly as it expresses its sense of the obligation, yet the most extensive and salutary blessings are, I believe, derived from two Bills passed the last Session of Parliament. No measure perhaps was ever proposed, which the Country felt so anxious to have carried into execution; no measures were, I am persuaded, ever carried into execution, which diffused such substantial happiness. During a few preceding years, some mechanics, manufacturers, artisans, and labourers, in almost every Town, and even in many Villages, throughout the Kingdom, assembled, at stated periods, to effect, by their Resolutions, a change in the Representation. Countenanced by a few people, perhaps a little wiser, but more wealthy than themselves, those poor men were artfully flattered into a persuasion, that they were possessed of talents, which qualified them for an higher sphere. Their passions heated, and their minds disgusted, they reluctantly returned to their several occupations, and wasted that time in idleness, quæque ipse miserrima vidi, which ought to have been employed in the prosecution of their callings, and the maintenance of their families. Since those Bills were enacted into Laws, the emulation of excelling in harangues has subsided; the ardour of proposing measures, of obviating objections, and of forming resolutions, has cooled: *and instead of consulting the welfare, and promoting the happiness of the state*, those self-created legislators now confine themselves within the narrow circle of their own duties. Such are the SOCIAL blessings arising from the two Bills; which, though misrepresented by the united powers of artifice and clamour, were opposed by numbers as few, as their arguments were feeble.

My

My readers, who have not an opportunity of perusing the posthumous works of Mr. Gibbon, however unfavourable may be their opinion of him, as a moral writer, will not perhaps be displeased at seeing his sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform.

“ If you do not,” says he, in a Letter to his noble Editor, “ resist the spirit of innovation in the first attempt, if you admit the smallest and most specious change in our parliamentary system, YOU ARE LOST. You will be driven from one step to another; from principles just in theory, to consequences most pernicious in practice; and *your first concessions will be productive of every subsequent mischief*, for which you will be answerable to your country, and to posterity.”

The whole Letter merits the most attentive and serious perusal.

PAGE II,—LINE 19th.

The highest benefactors to their country.—It may be replied to me in the words of the immortal Johnson, that “ my recommendations are like those of him that teaches upon land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth, and the wind always prosperous.” Innumerable difficulties may be opposed. But they are such difficulties as may, by perseverance and resolution, be surmounted: I will suppose a Rector to have neither carriages nor horses. But let him apply to any neighbouring Gentleman of landed property, in whose Parish Tythes are not paid, declaring, that, if he could be accommodated with so many carriages and horses as might be necessary to draw his tythes home, he would in return, however high the price of corn, supply, in a certain degree, the poor of such parish with Wheat at eight shillings the bushel, and Oats and Barley in the same proportion; would not that Gentleman to whom he made such declaration, send his own carriages and horses, and request his tenants, &c. to do the same? There can be no doubt of it. I have put this case to many Gentlemen, who all, with one voice, protested, that they would give such Clergyman every possible assistance.

If it be said, that it would be a very troublesome business, I allow it. But has he not very powerful inducements to impose such trouble upon himself? A man, his wife, and four children, consume half a bushel of Wheat in the week, which, upon

my hypothesis, if sold by the Rector, costs four shillings; if sold by the farmer, perhaps eight, perhaps ten shillings—which, during the late scarcity, was the case—above two-thirds of the labourers whole week's wages! Would not the reflection of the happiness the Rector diffuses, be a compensation abundantly sufficient, for the trouble, however great, of leading, stacking, threshing, and retailing his corn in small quantities? Had many Rectors done so, their Livings would have been augmented an additional third in value: a strong proof of the unreasonableness of the complaint against tythes.

It may be said that such a plan could not, from a variety of circumstances, be universally adopted, and that, from a partial adoption of it, no good could be derived. When we preach on the necessity of national amendment, a man might as well say, how can *his* repentance avert national judgments, and obtain national blessings, forgetting that he would thereby “ save his own soul?” Where such a design *can* be carried into effect, the Parish would have abundant cause to bless the Rector for his beneficent exertions.

Let it be considered farther, that an occasion for such exertions might not, more than once, occur during his incumbency; for I would be understood as confining myself to the supposition of, not an actual, but *an artificial scarcity*. The inconvenience and trouble resulting from the measure might probably be avoided, and the benevolent intentions of the Clergyman be, at the same time, fulfilled. The farmers, rather than their tythes should be drawn, would, it may be presumed, enter into an engagement to supply the poor, so long as the artificial scarcity continued, with corn at a moderate price. But should his reasoning and his entreaties unhappily prove ineffectual, let him, since he possesses the power, “ prevent the poverty of the poor from becoming their destruction.” Who would complain of such Clergyman's benevolence? Would the proprietor of the land? Would he murmur at seeing the inhabitants of his village fed with wholesome bread, whilst he was hearing from every quarter accounts of actual distress, and apprehensions of public tumults? Would the neighbourhood complain of such Clergyman's intermingling too much secular business, with his spiritual avocations? No! To such Clergymen

Clergymen would be applied the beautiful language of Flechier, " Il y a des
 " hommes de sa miséricorde que Dieu enrichit plus pour les autres, que pour eux
 " mêmes; qu' il suscite pour être comme les bienfaiteurs publics, et pour sou-
 " lager les misères du reste des hommes."

See Flechier's Sermons, Vol. I.

PAGE 13,—LINE 24.

A permanent increase of rent.—A farm should, it seems, be so valued and let, as that it will produce three rents. A Gentleman in this neighbourhood is letting a very considerable estate. He estimates Wheat at five shillings the bushel, and all other Grain in the same proportion; and his intention is, that, upon the supposition of five shillings being the average price, his several Tenants shall make three rents. But should *an artificial scarcity* again take place, and they should sell their Wheat at ten shillings the bushel, they will make six rents; should they sell it at fifteen shillings the bushel, they will make nine rents. Cannot such a Landlord, with great propriety, lay his tenants under some such restrictions as those I have mentioned?

PAGE 14,—LINE 8th.

Land will not under such restrictions be improved.—With respect to the improvement of land, if Gentlemen personally assure their tenants, or if, living at a distance, they authorize their Agents to assure them, that, provided they fulfil the conditions of the agreement, they shall continue upon their farms, *at the same rent, and for the same number of years*, as though they held them upon lease, the tenants of such landlords would not neglect to improve their land. One thing indeed will be requisite, that their Agents be men, *who have never been accused, or suspected of a deviation from moral rectitude.*

PAGE

PAGE 21,—LINE 20.

More powerful in its effects.—The characteristics of a society, living under the influence of the Gospel-Dispensation, are conceived with such energy of mind, and delineated with such elegance of diction, by the inimitable Flechier, that I cannot refuse myself the gratification of inserting the passage, “ Quelle seroit la
 “ douceur de la société, qui se régleroit selon l’Evangile? Chacun seroit content
 “ de sa vocation, et vivroit sans inquiétude, et sans envie. Le pauvre serviroit
 “ sans impatience, le riche commanderoit sans orgueil; ** le peuple seroit labo-
 “ rieux sans être inquiet; ** l’artisan industrieux sans être trompeur. Point
 “ d’envie parmi les pareils, point de procès, point de fraudes dans le trafic, point
 “ de trahison dans les confiances, point d’infidélité dans les amitiés, point de
 “ médifance dans les conversations. Chacun par des offices mutuels se rendroit
 “ agréable, et utile aux autres, et s’étudieroit à soutenir celui qui tombe, à con-
 “ soler celui qui pleure, à ressusciter, pour ainsi dire, celui qui meurt.”

Sermons, Vol. III.

PAGE 21,—LINE 24.

Whilst your deportment is copied with emulation.—“ Les Grands servent,” says the eloquent preacher I have just quoted, “ de spectacle au monde; on les regarde.
 “ Ils font la fortune des autres; on les imite. L’autorité de leur personne donne du
 “ poids à leurs exemples. Leur vie, quand elle est défordonnée, est comme
 “ une excuse publique, dont chacun se sert pour justifier ses mauvaises inclinations.
 “ Plusieurs croient qu’il est utile, quelques-uns qu’il est honorable, et presque tous,
 “ qu’il est permis de leur ressembler dans leurs défauts mêmes; et comme il y a une
 “ flatterie de parole qui les porte à les louer du bien qu’ils ne font pas; il y a une
 “ flatterie d’action, par laquelle on prétend se faire un mérite auprès d’eux, non
 „ seulement d’approuver, mais encore d’imiter tout le mal qu’ils font.”

Sermons, Vol. I.

